

A Preparation for Confession

Examination of Conscience

Prior to approaching a priest for confession and absolution, in the silence of the heart, the penitent should perform an examination of conscience in order to ensure proper preparation and a thorough confession.

While there are many methods of preparing for confession, many find the fourth chapter of the Rule of our holy Father Benedict to be particularly helpful.

Chapter IV - The Instruments of Good Works

1. First of all, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.
2. Then, to love your neighbour as yourself.
3. Next, not to kill.
4. Not to commit adultery.
5. Not to steal.
6. Not to covet.
7. Not to bear false witness.

8. To honour all people.
9. Not to do to another what one would not have done to oneself.
10. To deny oneself in order to follow Christ.
11. To chastise the body.
12. Not to seek after luxuries.
13. To love fasting.
14. To refresh the poor.
15. To clothe the naked.
16. To visit the sick.
17. To bury the dead.
18. To help in affliction.
19. To console the sorrowing.
20. To keep aloof from worldly actions.
21. To prefer nothing to the love of Christ.
22. Not to follow the promptings of anger.
23. Not to seek an occasion of revenge.
24. Not to foster deceit in one's heart.
25. Not to make a false peace.
26. Not to forsake charity.
27. Not to swear, lest perhaps one perjure oneself.

28. To utter the truth with heart and lips.
29. Not to render evil for evil.
30. To do no wrong to anyone, but to bear patiently any wrong done to oneself.
31. To love one's enemies.
32. Not to speak ill of those who speak ill of us, but rather to speak well of them.
33. To suffer persecution for justice' sake.
34. Not to be proud.
35. Not to be given to wine.
36. Not to be a glutton.
37. Not to be given to sleep.
38. Not to be slothful.
39. Not to be a murmurer.
40. Not to be a detractor.
41. To put one's trust in God.
42. To attribute any good one sees in oneself to God and not to oneself.
43. But always to acknowledge that the evil is one's own, and to attribute it to oneself.
44. To fear the days of judgement.
45. To be in fear of hell.

46. To desire everlasting life with all spiritual longing.
47. To keep death daily before one's eyes.
48. To keep guard at all times over the actions of one's life.
49. To know for certain that God sees one in every place.
50. To dash upon Christ as upon a rock one's evil thoughts the instant they come to one's heart, and to manifest them to one's spiritual father.
51. To keep one's mouth from speech that is wicked or full of deceit.
52. Not to love idle chatter.
53. Not to speak words that are vain or such as provoke laughter.
54. Not to love much or noisy laughter.
55. To listen willingly to holy reading.
56. To apply oneself frequently to prayer.
57. Daily with tears and sighs to confess one's sins to God in prayer, and to amend these evils for the future.

58. Not to fulfill the desires of the flesh.
59. To hate one's own will.
60. To obey in all things the commands of the Abbot, even though he himself (which God forbid) should act otherwise, being mindful of that precept of the Lord: "Do what they say; but not what they do".
61. Not to wish to be called holy before one is so, but first to be holy that one may be truly so called.
62. To fulfill the commandments of God daily by one's deeds.
63. To love chastity.
64. To hate nobody.
65. To have no jealousy or envy.
66. Not to love strife.
67. To fly from vanity and pride.
68. To reverence one's seniors.
69. To love one's juniors.
70. To pray for one's enemies in the love of Christ.
71. To make peace with those with whom one is

at variance before the setting of the sun.

72. And never to despair of God's mercy.

Behold, these are the tools of the spiritual craft, which, if they be constantly employed by day and by night, and delivered up on the day of judgement, will gain for us from the Lord that reward which He Himself has promised: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the human heart to conceive what things God has prepared for those who love Him."